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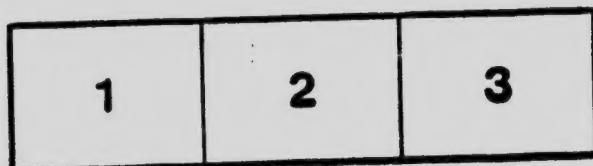
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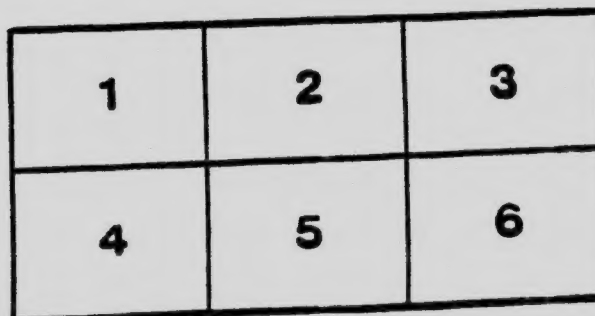
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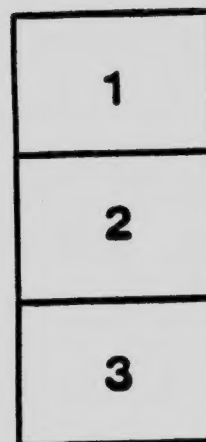
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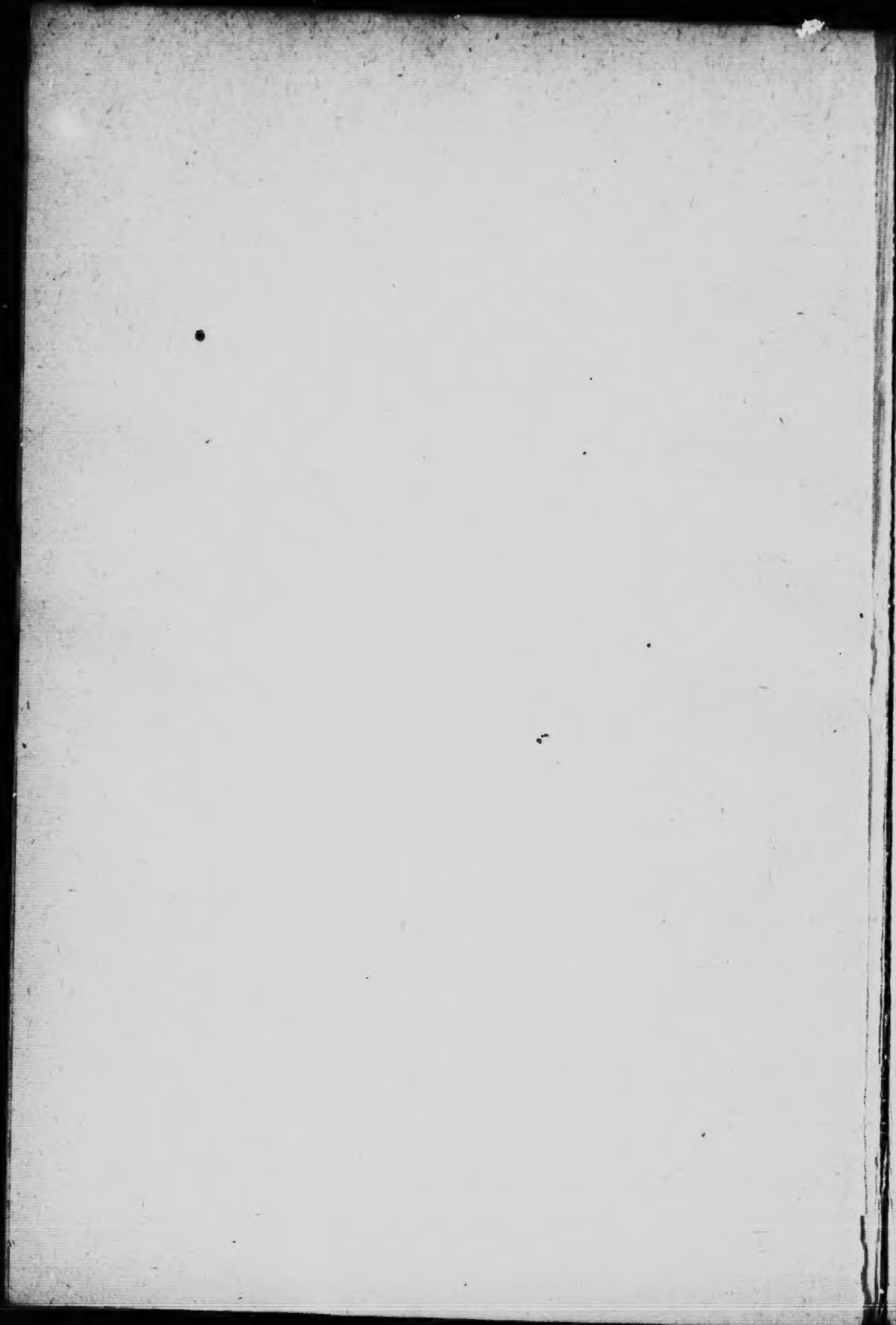
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A BOOK OF VERSE
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

COMPILED BY
J. C. SMITH

PART I

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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PREFACE

THIS is the first part of a Book of Verse designed to guide boys and girls 'where the Muses haunt', until such time as they can be made free of the whole field of English Poetry. The principles which have governed my choice and arrangement of poems will be set forth in the preface to Part III. Here it will be enough to say something of the way in which this first part should be used.

It is meant for children who have just learned to read. Long before that, all fortunate children will have heard much verse from the lips of mother or nurse—baby-rimes, jingles, nonsense-verses, the old classics of the nursery. All this they have learned by the ear only. And now, we will suppose, they have begun to master the mystery of reading. Yet they should still continue for a year or two to learn poetry, in the first place, by the ear. For the prime aim of poetry is to delight; and, so long as reading is difficult, the reading of poetry will be a task too hard to be delightful. Let these poems, then, be first read or said to the children; when they have heard them once or twice, they can afterwards con them not without pleasure from the book.

The delight which poetry gives to young children is largely a sensuous delight. 'The tinkling of the rime and dance of the numbers' please their ears. These verses should therefore be read or said to the children as musically as possible; not as prose is read, with attention almost solely to the sense, but rather

in a style between speech and song; in a time slower than the time of speech, allowing full value to the rimes and rhythms.

With children who have learned to read the pleasure of poetry is not all sensuous: the emotions, too, begin to be stirred. Now we cannot make children feel poetry unless we feel it ourselves and show that we do so by our manner of reading or repeating it.

Some explanation will be needed here and there to make the ideas clear enough to be felt: more than this runs the risk of explaining the charm away.

If a poem is to delight the mind as well as the ear, it should first be read or said as a whole; for it is only the whole that properly has meaning.

Most short poems that are worth knowing are worth knowing by heart. But if these poems be studied and enjoyed as I have said, it matters little how many verses are deliberately learned by heart. Verses that are used to train the voice should no doubt be learned as a set task. But beyond this there is little need to make a task of an exercise whose true end is to lay up permanent possibilities of delight. That end will be best attained if, after the poems have been studied and enjoyed, the children are left to choose for themselves what pieces they will learn by heart. If the book is in their hands for a year or two, those who have a gift for verse will be found to have learned most of it; the others might try at least to learn one poem from each section.

J. C. SMITH.

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[I have to thank E. Nesbit for permission to include her 'Child's Song in Spring' and 'Baby Seed Song'; Mr. W. B. Yeats for his 'Stolen Child'; Messrs. Chatto and Windus for George MacDonald's 'Little White Lily'; and Messrs. Macmillan for the verses entitled 'Is the Moon Tired?' from Miss Rossetti's 'Sing-Song'.]

I

THE SPRING MORNING

GET up, little sister, the morning is bright,
And the birds are all singing to welcome the light;
The buds are all op'ning—the dew's on the flower;
If you shake but a branch, see there falls quite a
shower.

By the side of their mothers, look, under the trees,
How the young lambs are skipping about as they
please;
And by all those rings on the water, I know
The fishes are merrily swimming below.

The bee, I dare say, has been long on the wing,
To get honey from every flower of the spring;
For the bee never idles, but labours all day,
And thinks, wise little insect, work better than play.

The lark's singing gaily; it loves the bright sun,
And rejoices that now the gay spring is begun;
For the spring is so cheerful, I think 'twould be
wrong
If we did not feel happy to hear the lark's song.

Get up, for when all things are merry and glad,
Good children should never be lazy and sad;
For God gives us daylight, dear sister, that we
May rejoice like the lark, and may work like the bee.

LADY FLORA HASTINGS.

GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD MORNING

A FAIR little girl sat under a tree,
Sewing as long as her eyes could see;
Then smoothed her work, and folded it right,
And said, 'Dear Work, Good Night! Good Night!'

Such a number of rooks came over her head,
Crying, 'Caw! caw!' on their way to bed;
She said, as she watched their curious flight,
'Little black things, Good Night! Good Night!'

The horses neighed, and the oxen lowed;
The sheep's 'Bleat! bleat!' came over the road;
All seeming to say with a quiet delight,
'Good little girl, Good Night! Good Night!'

She did not say to the sun, 'Good Night!'
Though she saw him there, like a ball of light;
For she knew he had God's time to keep
All over the world, and never could sleep.

The tall pink fox-glove bowed his head—
The violets curtsied and went to bed;
And good little Lucy tied up her hair,
And said, on her knees, her favourite prayer.

And while on her pillow she softly lay
She knew nothing more till again it was day:
And all things said to the beautiful sun,
'Good Morning! Good Morning! our work is begun!'

LORD HOUGHTON.

LITTLE WHITE LILY

LITTLE White Lily
Sat by a stone,
Drooping and waiting
Till the sun shone.

Little White Lily
Sunshine has fed ;
Little White Lily
Is lifting her head.

Little White Lily
Said, 'It is good—
Little White Lily's
Clothing and food.'
Little White Lily
Drest like a bride,
Shining with whiteness
And crowned beside.

Little White Lily
Droopeth with pain,
Waiting and waiting
For the wet rain.
Little White Lily
Holdeth her cup ;
Rain is fast falling
And filling it up.

Little White Lily
Said, 'Good again,
When I am thirsty
To have nice rain ;
Now I am stronger,
Now I am cool ;
Heat cannot burn me,
My veins are so full.'

Little White Lily
Smells very sweet :
On her head sunshine,
Rain at her feet.

Thanks to the sunshine!
Thanks to the rain!
Little White Lily
Is happy again.

G. MACDONALD.

IS THE MOON TIRED?

Is the moon tired? She looks so pale
Within her misty veil;
She scales the sky from east to west,
And takes no rest.

Before the coming of the night
The moon shows papery white;
Before the dawning of the day
She fades away.

C. G. ROSSETTI.

THE MOON

LADY Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving?
Over the sea.

Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?
All that love me.

Are you not tired with rolling, and never
Resting to sleep?

Why look so pale, and so sad, as for ever
Wishing to weep?

Ask me not this, little child! if you love me;
You are too bold;

I must obey my dear Father above me,
And do as I'm told.

Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving?
Over the sea.

Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?
All that love me.

LORD HOUGHTON.

CHILD'S SONG IN SPRING

THE silver birch is a dainty lady,
She wears a satin gown ;
The elm tree makes the old churchyard shady,
He will not live in town.

The English oak is a sturdy fellow,
He gets his green coat late ;
The willow is smart in a suit of yellow,
While brown the beech trees wait.

Such a gay green gown God gives the larches—
As green as He is good !
The hazels hold up their arms for arches
When Spring rides through the wood.

The chestnut's proud, and the lilac's pretty,
The poplar's gentle and tall,
But the plane tree's kind to the poor dull city—
I love him best of all !

E. NESBIT.

BABY SEED SONG

LITTLE brown seed, oh ! little brown brother,
Are you awake in the dark ?
Here we lie cosily, close to each other :
Hark to the song of the lark—
'Waken !' the lark says, 'waken and dress you ;
Put on your coats green and gay,
Blue sky will shine on you, sunshine caress you—
Waken ! 'tis morning—'tis May !'

Little brown seed, oh! little brown brother,
What kind of flower will you be?
I'll be a poppy—all white, like my mother;
Do be a poppy like me!
What! you're a sun-flower? How I shall miss you
When you're grown golden and high!
But I shall send all the bees up to kiss you;
Little brown brother, good-bye.

E. NESBIT.

OXFORDSHIRE CHILDREN'S MAY SONG

SPRING is coming, spring is coming,
Birdies, build your nest;
Weave together straw and feather,
Doing each your best.

Spring is coming, spring is coming,
Flowers are coming too:
Pansies, lilies, daffodillies,
Now are coming through.

Spring is coming, spring is coming,
All around is fair;
Shimmer and quiver on the river,
Joy is everywhere.

We wish you a happy May.

(COUNTRY RIME.)

LONG AGO IN CHANGEFUL AUTUMN

LONG ago in changeful Autumn,
When the leaves were turning brown,
From a tall oak's topmost branches
Fell a little acorn down.

And it tumbled by the pathway,
And a chance foot trod it deep
In the ground, where all the winter
In its cell it lay asleep,

With the white snow lying over,
And the frost to hold it fast;
Till there came the mild spring weather,
When it burst its shell at last.

First shot up a sapling tender,
Scarcely seen above the ground;
Then a mimic little oak-tree
Spread its tiny arms around.

Day by day the night-dews nursed it,
Summers hot and winters long:
The sweet sun shone bright upon it,
Till it grew both tall and strong.

Now it standeth like a giant,
Casting shadows broad and high,
With its trunk and leafy branches
Spreading up into the sky.

There the squirrel loves to frolic;
There the wild birds rest at night;
There the cattle come for shelter
In the noontide hot and bright.

ROBIN REDBREAST

GOOD-BYE, good-bye to Summer!
For Summer's nearly done;
The garden smiling faintly,
Cool breezes in the sun;

Our thrushes now are silent,
Our swallows flown away,—
But Robin's here, in coat of brown,
With ruddy breast-knot gay.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
Robin sings so sweetly,
In the falling of the year.

Bright yellow, red, and orange,
The leaves come down in hosts;
The trees are Indian Princes,
But soon they'll turn to ghosts;
The leathery pears and apples
Hang russet on the bough;
It's Autumn, Autumn, Autumn late,
'Twill soon be Winter now.
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And what will this poor Robin do?
For pinching days are near.

The fireside for the cricket,
The wheat-stack for the mouse,
When trembling night-winds whistle,
And moan all round the house.
The frosty ways like iron,
The branches plumed with snow,—
Alas, in Winter dead and dark
Where can poor Robin go?
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And a crumb of bread for Robin,
His little heart to cheer!

W. ALLINGHAM.

OLD WINTER

OLD Winter sad, in snow yclad,
Is making a doleful din;
But let him howl till he crack his jowl,
We will not let him in.

Ay, let him lift from the billowy drift
His hoary, haggard form,
And scowling stand, with his wrinkled hand
Outstretching to the storm.

And let his weird and sleety beard
Stream loose upon the blast,
And, rustling, chime to the tinkling rime
From his bald head falling fast.

Let his baleful breath shed blight and death
On herb and flower and tree;
And brooks and ponds in crystal bonds
Bind fast, but what care we?

Let him push at the door,—in the chimney roar,
And rattle the window pane;
Let him in at us spy with his icicle eye,
But he shall not entrance gain.

Let him gnaw, forsooth, with his freezing tooth,
On our roof-tiles, till he tire;
But we care not a whit, as we jovial sit
Before our blazing fire.

Come, lads, let's sing, till the rafters ring;
Come push the can about;—
From our snug fireside this Christmas-tide
We'll keep Old Winter out.

T. NOEL.

II

THE ABBOT OF CANTERBURY

An ancient story I'll tell you anon
Of a notable prince that was called King John;
And he ruled England with main and with might,
For he did great wrong and maintained little right.

And I'll tell you a story, a story so merry,
Concerning the Abbot of Canterbury;
How for his housekeeping, and high renown,
They rode post for him to fair London town.

An hundred men, the king did hear say,
The abbot kept in his house every day;
And fifty gold chains, without any doubt,
In velvet coats waited the abbot about.

'How now, father abbot? I hear it of thee,
Thou keepest a far better house than me;
And, for thy housekeeping and high renown,
I fear thou work'st treason against my crown.'

'My liege,' quoth the abbot, 'I would it were known,
I never spend nothing but what is my own;
And I trust your grace will do me no dere
For spending of my own true-gotten gear.'

'Yes, yes, father abbot, thy fault it is high,
And now for the same thou needest must die;
For except thou canst answer me questions three,
Thy head shall be smitten from thy body.

'And first,' quoth the king, 'when I'm in this stead,
With my crown of gold so fair on my head,
Among all my liege-men so noble of birth,
Thou must tell me to one penny what I am worth.

dere] harm.

'Secondly, tell me, without any doubt,
How soon I may ride the whole world about.
And at the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly what I do think.'

'O, these are hard questions for my shallow wit,
Nor I cannot answer your grace as yet;
But if you will give me but three weeks' space,
I'll do my endeavour to answer your grace.'

'Now three weeks' space to thee will I give,
And that is the longest time thou hast to live;
For if thou dost not answer my questions three,
Thy lands and thy living are forfeit to me.'

Away rode the abbot all sad at that word,
And he rode to Cambridge and Oxenford;
But never a doctor there was so wise
That could with his learning an answer devise.

Then home rode the abbot of comfort so cold,
And he met his shepherd a-going to fold:
'How now, my lord abbot, you are welcome home;
What news do you bring us from good King John?'

'Sad news, sad news, shepherd, I must give:
That I have but three days more to live;
For if I do not answer him questions three,
My head will be smitten from my body.'

'The first is to tell him there in that stead,
With his crown of gold so fair on his head,
Among all his liege-men so noble of birth,
To within one penny of what he is worth.'

'The second, to tell him, without any doubt,
How soon he may ride this whole world about:
And at the third question I must not shrink
To tell him there truly what he does think.'

‘Now cheer up, sir abbot! Did you never hear yet
That a fool he may learn a wise man wit?
Lend me horse, and serving-men, and your apparel,
And I’ll ride to London to answer your quarrel.

‘Nay, frown not, if it hath been told unto me,
I am like your lordship as ever may be:
And if you will but lend me your gown,
There is none shall know us at fair London town.

‘Now horses and serving-men thou shalt have,
With sumptuous array most gallant and brave,
With crozier and mitre, and rochet and cope,
Fit to appear ’fore our father the Pope.’

‘Now welcome, sir abbot,’ the king he did say,
‘Tis well thou’rt come back to keep thy day;
For and if thou canst answer my questions three,
Thy life and thy living both saved shall be.

‘And first, when thou seest me here in this stead,
With my crown of gold so fair on my head,
Among all my liege-men so noble of birth,
Tell me to one penny what I am worth.’

*‘For thirty pence our Saviour was sold
Among the false Jews, as I have been told;
And twenty-nine is the worth of thee,
For I think thou’rt one penny worser than He.’*

The king he laughed, and swore by St. Bittel:
‘I did not think I had been worth so little!
—Now secondly tell me, without any doubt,
How soon I may ride this whole world about.’

*‘You must rise with the sun, and ride with the same,
Until the next morning he riseth again,
And then your grace need not make any doubt,
But in twenty-four hours you’ll ride it about.’*

The king he laughed, and swore by St. John:
'I did not think it could be done so soon!
—Now from the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly what I do think.'

*'Yea, that shall I do, and make your grace merry:
You think I'm the abbot of Canterbury;
But I'm his poor shepherd, as plain you may see,
That am come to beg pardon for him and for me.'*

The king he laughed, and swore by the mass,
'I'll make thee lord abbot this day in his place!'
'Now nay, my liege, be not in such speed,
For alack I can neither write nor read.'

'Four nobles a week, then, I will give thee,
For this merry jest thou hast shown unto me;
And tell the old abbot, when thou comest home,
Thou hast brought him a pardon from good King
John.'

(OLD ENGLISH BALLAD.)

MEDDLESOME MATTY

O HOW one ugly trick has spoiled
The sweetest and the best!
Matilda, though a pleasant child,
One ugly trick possessed,
Which like a cloud before the skies
Hid all her better qualities.

Sometimes she'd lift the teapot lid,
To peep at what was in it,
Or tilt the kettle, if you did
But turn your back a minute;
In vain you told her not to touch,
Her trick of meddling grew so much.

Her Grandmamma went out one day,
And by mistake she laid
Her spectacles and snuff-box gay
Too near the little maid.
'Ah! well,' thought she, 'I'll try them on,
As soon as Grandmamma is gone.'

Forthwith she placed upon her nose
The glasses large and wide;
And looking round, as I suppose,
The snuff-box too she spied.
'O what a pretty box is this!
I'll open it,' said little Miss.

'I know that Grandmamma would say
"Don't meddle with it, dear";
But then she's far enough away,
And no one else is near;
Beside, what can there be amiss
In opening such a box as this?'

So thumb and finger went to work
To move the stubborn lid,
And presently a mighty jerk
The mighty mischief did;
For all at once, ah, woeful case!
The snuff came puffing in her face.

Poor eyes, poor nose, poor mouth and chin
A dismal sight presented;
And as the snuff got further in,
Sincerely she repented;
In vain she ran about for ease,
She could do nothing else but sneeze.

She dashed the spectacles away,
To wipe her tingling eyes,
And as in twenty bits they lay,
Her Grandmamma she spies;—

'Heyday! and what's the matter now?'
Cried Grandmamma, with lifted brow.

Matilda, smarting with the pain,
And tingling still and sore,
Made many a promise to refrain
From ever meddling more;
And 'tis a fact, as I have heard,
She ever since has kept her word.

ANN TAYLOR.

GEORGE AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEP

HIS petticoats now George cast off,
For he was four years old;
His trousers were of nankeen stuff,
With buttons bright as gold.
'May I,' said George, 'just go abroad,
My pretty clothes to show?
May I, mamma? but speak the word';
The answer was, 'No, no.

'Go, run below, George, in the court,
But go not in the street,
Lest boys with you should make some sport,
Or gipsies you should meet.'
Yet, though forbidden, he went out,
That other boys might spy,
And proudly there he walked about,
And thought—'How fine am I!'

But whilst he strutted through the street,
With looks both vain and peevish,
A sweep-boy passed, whom no one would meet,
He slipped—into the dirt.

The sooty lad, whose heart was kind,
To help him quickly ran,
And grasped his arm, with 'Never mind,
You're up, my little man'.

Sweep wiped his clothes with labour vain,
And begged him not to cry;
And when he'd blackened every stain,
Said 'Little sir, good-bye'.
Poor George, almost as dark as sweep,
And smeared in dress and face,
Bemoans with sobs, both loud and deep,
His well-deserved disgrace.

ADELAIDE O'KEEFE.

JOHN GILPIN

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear—
'Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

'To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
All in a chaise and pair.

'My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we.'

He soon replied—'I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

'I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horse to go.'

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin—'That's well said ;
And, for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear.'

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife ;
O'erjoyed was he to find
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
Where they did all get in ;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin !

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again ;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came downstairs—
'The wine is left behind!'

'Good lack!' quoth he—'yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise.'

Now mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then, over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed!

But, finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

So, 'Fair and softly,' John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig!—
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig!

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all;
And ev'ry soul cried out—'Well done!'
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—Who but he?
His fame soon spread around—
'He carries weight!' 'He rides a race!'
'Tis for a thousand pound!

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view
How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Where shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
And till he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay.

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wond'ring much
To see how he did ride.

'Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here 's the house'—
They all at once did cry;
'The dinner waits, and we are tired:'
Said Gilpin—'So am I!'

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:—

'What news? what news? your tidings tell;
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bare-headed you are come,
Or why you come at all?'

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke:—

'I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here—
They are upon the road.'

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and, in his turn,
Thus showed his ready wit—
'My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

'But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case.'

Said John—'It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton
And I should dine at Ware!'

So, turning to his horse, he said—
'I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine.'

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig!
He lost them sooner than at first—
For why?—they were too big!

Now, mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pulled out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth she said
That drove them to the Bell—
'This shall be yours when you bring back
My husband safe and well.'

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But, not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went post-boy at his heels!—
The post-boy's horse right glad to miss
The lumb'ring of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With post-boy scamp'ring in the rear.
They raised the hue and cry:

'Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!'
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did—and won it too!—
For he got first to town;
Nor stopped till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing—Long live the king,
And Gilpin long live he;
And, when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

W. COWPER.

III

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

‘WILL you walk into my parlour?’ said the Spider
to the Fly,

‘Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy;
The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
And I have many curious things to show when you
are there.’

‘Oh no, no,’ said the little Fly, ‘to ask me is in vain;
For who goes up your winding stair can ne’er come
down again.’

‘I’m sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up
so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?’ said the Spider to
the Fly.

‘There are pretty curtains drawn around, the sheets
are fine and thin;
And if you like to rest awhile, I’ll snugly tuck you in!’

'Oh no, no,' said the little Fly, 'for I've often heard
it said,
They never, never wake again, who sleep upon
your bed!'

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, 'Dear friend,
what can I do,
To prove the warm affection I've always felt for you?
I have within my pantry good store of all that's nice;
I'm sure you're very welcome—will you please to take
a slice?'
'Oh no, no,' said the little Fly, 'kind sir, that
cannot be,
I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish
to see!'

'Sweet creature,' said the Spider, 'you're witty and
you're wise;
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant
are your eyes!
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,
If you'll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold
yourself.'
'I thank you, gentle sir,' she said, 'for what you're
pleased to say,
And bidding you good morning now, I'll call
another day.'

The Spider turned him round about, and went into
his den,
For well he knew the silly Fly would soon be back
again;
So he wove a subtle web, in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready, to dine upon the Fly.
Then he came out to his door again, and merrily
did sing,—

'Come hither, hither, pretty Fly, with the pearl and
silver wing ;
Your robes are green and purple—there 's a crest upon
your head ;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are
dull as lead.'

Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little Fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly
flitting by ;
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and
nearer drew,
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and
purple hue—
Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish
thing! At last,
Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held
her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,
Within his little parlour—but she ne'er came out again!

M. HOWITT.

THE ROBIN AND THE WREN

THE Robin cam' to the Wren's nest,
And keekit in, and keekit in :
'Oh, wae's me on your auld pow,
Wad ye be in? wad ye be in?
'For ye shall never lie withoot
And me within, and me within,
As lang's I hae an auld cloot
To row ye in, to row ye in.'

(OLD SCOTS SONG.)

keekit] peeped.

pow] poll, head.

row] roll, wrap.

THE HARPER

ON the green banks of Shannon when Sheelah was
nigh,
No blithe Irish lad was so happy as I;
No harp like my own could so cheerily play,
And wherever I went was my poor dog Tray.

When at last I was forced from my Sheelah to part,
She said, (while the sorrow was big at her heart),
Oh! remember your Sheelah when far, far away:
And be kind, my dear Pat, to our poor dog Tray.

Poor dog! he was faithful and kind to be sure,
And he constantly loved me although I was poor;
When the sour-looking folk sent me heartless away,
I had always a friend in my poor dog Tray.

When the road was so dark and the night was so cold,
And Pat and his dog were grown weary and old,
How snugly we slept in my old coat of gray,
And he licked me for kindness—my poor dog Tray.

Though my wallet was scant I remembered his case,
Nor refused my last crust to his pitiful face;
But he died at my feet on a cold winter day,
And I played a lament for my poor dog Tray.

Where now shall I go, poor, forsaken, and blind?
Can I find one to guide me, so faithful and kind?
To my sweet native village, so far, far away,
I can never return with my poor dog Tray.

T. CAMPBELL.

THE BOY AND SNAKE

HENRY was every morning fed
With a full mess of milk and bread.
One day the boy his breakfast took,
And ate it by a purling brook
Which through his mother's orchard ran.
From that time — er when he can
Escape his mother's eye, he there
Takes his food in th' open air.
Finding the child delight to eat
Abroad, and make the grass his seat,
His mother lets him have his way.
With free leave Henry every day
Thither repairs, until she heard
Him talking of a *fine grey bird*.
This pretty bird, he said, indeed,
Came every day with him to feed,
And it loved him, and loved his milk,
And it was smooth and soft like silk.
His mother thought she'd go and see
What sort of bird this same might be.
On the next morn she follows Harry,
And carefully she sees him carry
Through the long grass his heaped-up mess.
What was her terror and distress,
When she saw the infant take
His bread and milk close to a snake!
Upon the grass he spreads his feast,
And sits down by his frightful guest,
Who had waited for the treat;
And now they both begin to eat.
Fond mother! shriek not; O beware
The least small noise, O have a care—
The least small noise that may be made,
The wily snake will be afraid—

If he hear the lightest sound,
 He will inflict th' envenomed wound.
 She speaks not, moves not, scarce does breathe,
 As she stands the trees beneath;
 No sound she utters; and she soon
 Sees the child lift up its spoon
 And tap the snake upon the head,
 Fearless of harm; and then he said,
 As speaking to familiar mate,
 'Keep on your own side, do, Grey Pate':
 The snake then to the other side,
 As one rebukèd, seems to glide;
 And now again advancing nigh,
 Again she hears the infant cry,
 Tapping the snake, 'Keep further, do;
 Mind, Grey Pate, what I say to you.'
 The danger's o'er—she sees the boy
 (O what a change from fear to joy!)
 Rise and bid the snake 'good-bye';
 Says he, 'Our breakfast's done, and I
 Will come again to-morrow day':
 Then lightly tripping, ran away.

C. and M. LAMB.

THE BEASTS IN THE TOWER

WITHIN the precincts of this yard,
 Each in his narrow confines barred,
 Dwells every beast that can be found
 On Afric or on Indian ground.
 How different was the life they led
 In those wild haunts where they were bred,
 To this tame servitude and fear,
 Enslaved by man, they suffer here!

In that uneasy close recess
Couches a sleeping lioness ;
That next den holds a bear ; the next
A wolf, by hunger ever vexed ;
There, fiercer from the keeper's lashes,
His teeth the fell hyaena gnashes ;
That creature on whose back abound
Black spots upon a yellow ground,
A panther is, the fairest beast
That haunteth in the spacious East.
He underneath a fair outside
Does cruelty and treach'ry hide.

That cat-like beast that to and fro
Restless as fire does ever go,
As if his courage did resent
His limbs in such confinement pent,
That should their prey in forests take,
And make the Indian jungles quake,
A tiger is. Observe how sleek
And glossy smooth his coat : no streak
On satin ever matched the pride
Of that which marks his furry hide.
How strong his muscles ! he with ease
Upon the tallest man could seize,
In his large mouth away could bear him,
And into thousand pieces tear him :
Yet cabined so securely here,
The smallest infant need not fear.

That lordly creature next to him
A lion is. Survey each limb.
Observe the texture of his claws,
The massy thickness of those jaws ;
His mane that sweeps the ground in length,
Like Samson's locks, betokening strength.
In force and swiftness he excels
Each beast that in the forest dwells ;

The savage tribes him king confess
Throughout the howling wilderness.
Woe to the hapless neighbourhood,
When he is pressed by want of food!
Of man, or child, of bull, or horse,
He makes his prey; such is his force.
A waste behind him he creates,
Whole villages depopulates.
Yet here within appointed lines
How small a grate his rage confines!

This place methinks resembleth well
The world itself in which we dwell.
Perils and snares on every ground
Like these wild beasts beset us round.
But Providence their rage restrains,
Our heavenly Keeper sets them chains;
His goodness saveth every hour
His darlings from the lion's power.

C. and M. LAMB.

A DREAM

ONCE a dream did weave a shade
O'er my Angel-guarded bed,
That an emmet lost its way
Where on grass methought I lay.

Troubled, 'wilderer, and forlorn,
Dark, benighted, travel-worn,
Over many a tangled spray,
All heart-broke I heard her say:

'Oh, my children! do they cry?
Do they hear their father sigh?
Now they look abroad to see:
Now return and weep for me.'

Pitying, I dropped a tear ;
But I saw a glow-worm near,
Who replied : ' What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night ?

' I am set to light the ground,
While the beetle goes his round :
Follow now the beetle's hum ;
Little wanderer, hie thee home.'

W. BLAKE.

IV

THE FAIRY RING

LET us dance and let us sing,
Dancing in a merry ring ;
We'll be fairies on the green,
Sporting round the Fairy Queen.

Like the seasons of the year,
Round we circle in a sphere ;
I'll be Summer, you'll be Spring,
Dancing in a fairy ring.

Spring and Summer glide away,
Autumn comes with tresses gray,
Winter hand in hand with Spring,
Dancing in a fairy ring.

Faster, faster round we go,
While our cheeks with roses glow,
Free as birds upon the wing
Dancing in a fairy ring.

LAUGHING SONG

WHEN the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by ;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it ;

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene,
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing ' Ha, Ha, He ! '

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread,
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of ' Ha, Ha, He ! '

W. BLAKE.

NURSE'S SONG

WHEN the voices of ' children are heard on the green,
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast,
And everything else is still.

' Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,
And the dews of night arise ;
Come, come, leave off play, and let us away
Till the morning appears in the skies.'

' No, no, let us play, for it is yet day,
And we cannot go to sleep ;
Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,
And the hills are all covered with sheep.'

' Well, well, go and play till the light fades away,
And then go home to bed.'
The little ones leaped and shouted and laughed
And all the hills echoed.

W. BLAKE.

THE ECHOING GREEN

THE Sun does arise,
And make happy the skies ;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring ;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the Echoing Green.

Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say :
' Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys,
In our youth-time were seen
On the Echoing Green.'

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry ;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening Green.

W. BLAKE.

REEDS OF INNOCENCE

PIPING down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

‘Pipe a song about a Lamb!’
So I piped with merry cheer.
‘Piper, pipe that song again;’
So I piped: he wept to hear.

‘Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer:’
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read.
So he vanished from my sight,
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

W. BLAKE.

V

SWEET AND LOW

SWEET and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!

Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.
Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

A. TENNYSON.

A CRADLE SONG

SWEET dreams, form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head;
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent, moony beams.

Sweet sleep, with soft down
Weave thy brows an infant crown.
Sweet sleep, Angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child.

Sweet smiles, in the night
Hover over my delight;
Sweet smiles, mother's smiles,
All the livelong night beguiles.

Sweet moans, dovelike sighs,
Chase not slumber from thy eyes.
Sweet moans, sweeter smiles,
All the dovelike moans beguiles.

Sleep, sleep, happy child,
All creation slept and smiled ;
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,
While o'er thee thy mother weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee,
Thy Maker lay and wept for me.

Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When He was an infant small.
Thou His image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee,

Smiles on thee, on me, on all ;
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are His own smiles ;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.

W. BLAKE.

ANSWER TO A CHILD'S QUESTION

Do you ask what the birds say? The sparrow,
the dove,

The linnet and thrush say, 'I love and I love!'
In the winter they're silent—the wind is so strong;
What it says, I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm
weather,

And singing, and loving—all come back together.
But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings; and for ever sings he—
'I love my Love, and my Love loves me!'

S. T. COLERIDGE.

SOMETHING CHILDISH BUT VERY NATURAL

If I had but two little wings,
And were a little feathery bird,
To you I'd fly, my dear!
But thoughts like these are idle things,
And I stay here.

But in my sleep to you I fly:
I'm always with you in my sleep;
The world is all one's own.
But then one wakes, and where am I?
All, all alone.

Sleep stays not, though a monarch bids:
So I love to wake ere break of day:
For though my sleep be gone,
Yet, while 'tis dark, one shuts one's lids,
And still dreams on.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

WISHING

RING-TING! I wish I were a primrose,
A bright yellow primrose, blowing in the Spring!
The stooping boughs above me,
The wandering bee to love me,
The fern and moss to creep across,
And the elm-tree for our king!

Nay—stay! I wish I were an elm-tree,
A great lofty elm-tree, with green leaves gay!
The winds would set them dancing,
The sun and moonshine glance in,
The birds would house among the boughs,
And sweetly sing!

O—no! I wish I were a robin,
A robin or a little wren, everywhere to go;
Through forest, field, or garden,
And ask no leave or pardon,
Till Winter comes with icy thumbs
To ruffle up our wing!

Well—tell! Where should I fly to,
Where go to sleep in the dark wood or dell?
Before a day was over,
Home comes the rover,
For mother's kiss, sweeter this
Than any other thing!

W. ALLINGHAM

THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER

WHEN my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry 'weep! 'weep! 'weep 'weep!'
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved: so I said,
'Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.'

And so he was quiet, and that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!—
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned and Jack,
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffins and set them all free;
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;
And the angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.
And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm:
So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

W. BLAKE.

HOLY THURSDAY

'Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces
clean,
The children walking two and two, in red and
blue and green,
Grey-headed beadles walked before, with wands as
white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's they like 'Thames'
waters flow.
O what a multitude they seemed, these flowers of
London town!
Seated in companies, they sit with radiance all
their own.
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes
of lambs,
Thousands of little boys and girls raising their
innocent hands.
Now like a mighty wind they raise to Heaven the
voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of
Heaven among.
Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of
the poor;
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from
your door.

W. BLAKE.

WE ARE SEVEN

I MET a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.
She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad;
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.
'Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be?'
'How many? Seven in all,' she said,
And wondering looked at me.
'And where are they? I pray you tell.'
She answered, 'Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.
'Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the churchyard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.'
'You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.'
Then did the little Maid reply,
'Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the churchyard lie,
Beneath the churchyard tree.'
'You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the churchyard laid,
Then ye are only five.

'Their graves are green, they may be seen,'
 The little Maid replied,
 'Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
 And they are side by side.
 'My stockings there I often knit,
 My kerchief there I hem;
 And there upon the ground I sit,
 And sing a song to them.
 'And often after sunset, Sir,
 When it is light and fair,
 I take my little porringer,
 And eat my supper there.
 'The first that died was sister Jane;
 In bed she moaning lay,
 Till God released her of her pain;
 And then she went away.
 'So in the churchyard she was laid;
 And, when the grass was dry,
 Together round her grave we played,
 My brother John and I.
 'And when the ground was white with snow,
 And I could run and slide,
 My brother John was forced to go,
 And he lies by her side.'
 'How many are you, then,' said I,
 'If they two are in heaven?'
 Quick was the little Maid's reply,
 'O Master! we are seven.'
 'But they are dead; those two are dead!
 Their spirits are in heaven!'
 'Twas throwing words away; for still
 The little Maid would have her will,
 And said, 'Nay, we are seven!'

W. WORDSWORTH.

VI

THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER

LITTLE Cowboy, what have you heard,
Up on the lonely rath's green mound?
Only the plaintive yellow bird
Sighing in sultry fields around,
Chary, chary, chary, chee-ee!
Only the grasshopper and the bee?

‘Tip-tap, rip-rap,
Tick-a-tack-too!
Scarlet leather, sewn together,
This will make a shoe.
Left, right, pull it tight;
Summer days are warm;
Underground in winter,
Laughing at the storm!’
Lay your ear close to the hill.
Do you not catch the tiny clamour—
Busy click of an elfin hammer,
Voice of the Lupracaun singing shrill
As he merrily plies his trade?
He's a span
And a quarter in height.
Get him in sight, hold him tight,
And you're a made
Man!

You watch your cattle in the summer day,
Sup on potatoes, sleep in the hay;
How would you like to roll in your carriage,
Look for a duchess's daughter in marriage?
Seize the Shoemaker—then you may!
‘Big boots a-hunting,
Sandals in the hall,
White for a wedding-feast,
Pink for a ball.

This way, that way,
So we make a shoe;
Getting rich every stitch,
Tick-tack-too!

Nine-and-ninety treasure-crocks
This keen miser-fairy hath,
Hid in mountains, woods, and rocks,
Ruin and round-tow'r, cave and rath,
And where the cormorants build;
From times of old
Guarded by him;
Each of them filled
Full to the brim
With gold!

I caught him at work one day, myself,
In the castle-ditch where foxglove grows,—
A wrinkled, wizened, and bearded elf,
Spectacles stuck on his pointed nose,
Silver buckles to his hose,
Leather apron—shoe in his lap—
'Rip-rap, tip-tap,
Tick-tack-too!
(A grig skipped upon my cap,
Away the moth flew)
Buskins for a fairy prince,
Brogues for his son,—
Pay me well, pay me well,
When the job is done!
The rogue was mine, beyond a doubt.
I stared at him; he stared at me;
'Servant, Sir!' 'Humph!' says he,
And pulled a snuff-box out.
He took a long pinch, looked better pleased,
The queer little Lupracaun;

Offered the box with a whimsical grace,—
Pouf! he flung the dust in my face,
And while I sneezed,
Was gone!

W. ALLINGHAM.

THE FAIRIES

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain-lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columbkil he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow;
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wake

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
As to dig them up in spite,
He shall find the thornies set
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

W. ALLINGHAM.

THE STOLEN CHILD

WHERE dips the rocky highland
Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,
There lies a leafy island
Where flapping herons wake
The drowsy water-rats ;
There we've hid our faery vats,
Full of berries,
And of reddest stolen cherries.
Come away, O human child !
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you
can understand.

Where the wave of moonlight glosses
The dim gray sands with light,
Far off by furthest Rosses
We foot it all the night,
Weaving olden dances,
Mingling hands and mingling glances
Till the moon has taken flight ;
To and fro we leap
And chase the frothy bubbles,
While the world is full of troubles
And is anxious in its sleep.
Come away, O human child !
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you
can understand.

Where the wandering water gushes
From the hills above Glen-Car,
In pools among the rushes
That scarce could bathe a star,

We seek for slumbering trout,
And whispering in their ears
Give them unquiet dreams;
Leaning softly out
From ferns that drop their tears
Over the young streams.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you
can understand.

Away with us he's going,
The solemn-eyed:
He'll hear no more the lowing
Of the calves on the warm hillside;
Or the kettle on the hob
Sing peace into his breast,
Or see the brown mice bob
Round and round the oatmeal-chest.
For he comes, the human child,
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
From a world more full of weeping than he can
understand.

W. B. YEATS.

THE LITTLE GIRL LOST

In futurity
I prophetic see
That the earth from sleep
(Grave the sentence deep)

Shall arise and seek
For her Maker meek;
And the desert wild
Become a garden mild.

In the southern clime,
Where the summer's prime
Never fades away,
Lovely Lyca lay.

Seven summers old
Lovely Lyca told;
She had wandered long
Hearing wild birds' song.

'Sweet sleep, come to me
Underneath this tree.
Do father, mother, weep?
Where can Lyca sleep?

'Lost in desert wild
Is your little child.
How can Lyca sleep
If her mother weep?

'If her heart does ache
Then let Lyca wake;
If my mother sleep,
Lyca shall not weep.

'Frowning, frowning night,
O'er this desert bright,
Let thy moon arise
While I close my eyes.'

Sleeping Lyca lay
While the beasts of prey,
Come from caverns deep,
Viewed the maid asleep.

The kingly lion stood,
And the virgin viewed,
Then he gambolled round
O'er the hallowed ground.

Leopards, tigers, play
Round her as she lay,
While the lion old
Bowed his mane of gold.

And her bosom lick,
And upon her neck
From his eyes of flame
Ruby tears there came;

While the lioness
Loosed her slender dress,
And naked they conveyed
To caves the sleeping maid.

W. BLAKE.

THE LITTLE GIRL FOUND

ALL the night in woe
Lyca's parents go
Over valleys deep,
While the deserts weep.

Tired and woe-begone,
Hoarse with making moan,
Arm in arm seven days
They traced the desert ways.

Seven nights they sleep
Among shadows deep,
And dream they see their child
Starved in desert wild.

Pale, thro' pathless ways
The fancied image strays
Famished, weeping, weak,
With hollow piteous shriek.

Rising from unrest,
The trembling woman prest
With feet of weary woe:
She could no further go.

In his arms he bore
Her, armed with sorrow sore;
Till before their way
A couching lion lay.

Turning back was vain:
Soon his heavy mane
Bore them to the ground.
Then he stalked around,

Smelling to his prey;
But their fears allay
When he licks their hands,
And silent by them stands

They look upon his eyes
Filled with deep surprise;
And wondering behold
A spirit armed in gold.

On his head a crown;
On his shoulders down
Flowed his golden hair.
Gone was all their care.

'Follow me,' he said,
'Weep not for the maid;
In my palace deep
Lyca lies asleep.'

Then they followèd
Where the vision led,
And saw their sleeping child
Among tigers wild.

To this day they dwell
In a lonely dell;
Nor fear the wolvis howl
Nor the lions' growl.

W. BLAKE.

VII

USE OF FLOWERS

GOD might have bade the earth bring forth
Enough for great and small,
The oak-tree and the cedar-tree,
Without a flower at all.

We might have had enough, enough
For every want of ours,
For luxury, medicine, and for toil,
And yet have had no flowers.

Then wherefore, wherefore were they made,
All dyed with rainbow light,
All fashioned with supremest grace,
Upspringing day and night:—

Springing in valleys green and low,
And on the mountains high,
And in the silent wilderness
Where no man passes by?

Our outward life requires them not—
Then wherefore had they birth?
To minister delight to man,
To beautify the earth;

To comfort man—to whisper hope,
Whene'er his faith is dim;
For Who so careth for the flowers
Will much more care for him.

M. HOWITT.

THE LITTLE BLACK BOY

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O my soul is white;
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And, sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissèd me,
And, pointing to the east, began to say:

‘Look on the rising sun,—there God does live,
And gives His light, and gives His heat away;
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

‘And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

‘For when our souls have learned the heat to bear,
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear His voice,
Saying: “Come out from the grove, My love and care,
And round My golden tent like lambs rejoice.”’

Thus did my mother say, and kissèd me;
And thus I say to little English boy.
When I from black, and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I’ll shade him from the heat, till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our father’s knee;
And then I’ll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.

W. BLAKE.

THE LAMB

LITTLE Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by His name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

W. BLAKE.

KING WENCESLAS AND HIS PAGE

GOOD King Wenceslas looked out
On the Feast of Stephen,
Where the snow lay round about,
Deep, and crisp, and even.
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gathering winter fuel.

‘Hither, page, and stand by me,
If thou know’st it, telling:
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?’
‘Sire, he lives a good league hence
Underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence
By Saint Agnes’ fountain.’

‘Bring me flesh and bring me wine,
Bring me pine-logs hither:
Thou and I will see him dine
When we bear them thither.’
Page and monarch forth they went,
Forth they went together,
Through the rude wind’s wild lament
And the bitter weather.

‘Sire, the night is darker now,
And the wind blows stronger:
Fails my heart, I know not how,
I can go no longer.’
‘Mark my footsteps good, my page,
Tread thou in them boldly;
Thou shalt find the winter’s rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly.’

In his master’s steps he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
Which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing.

J. M. NEALE.

GOD REST YOU MERRY, GENTLEMEN

GOD rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
Was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy!
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
Was born on Christmas Day.

In Bethlehem, in Jewry,
This blessed babe was born,
And laid within a manger,
Upon this blessed morn;
The which His mother, Mary,
Nothing did take in scorn.
O tidings—

From God, our Heavenly Father,
A blessed angel came;
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same:
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name.
O tidings—

'Fear not,' then said the angel,
'Let nothing you affright,
This day is born a Saviour
Of virtue, power, and might,
So frequently to vanquish all
The friends of Satan quite.'
O tidings—

The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding
In tempest, storm, and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway,
This blessed babe to find.
O tidings—

But when to Bethlehem they came,
Whereat this infant lay,
They found Him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay,
His mother Mary kneeling
Unto the Lord did pray.
O tidings—

Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All others doth deface.
O tidings of comfort and joy!
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
Was born on Christmas Day.

(OLD CAROL.)

THE FIRST NOWELL

THE first Nowell the angels did say
Was to three poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.*

They lookèd up and saw a star
Shine in the East beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.*

And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.*

The star drew nigh to the north-west,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay.

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.*

Then entered in those wise men three,
Most reverently upon their knee,
And offered there in His presence
Both gold and myrrh and frankincense.

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.*

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
That hath made heaven and earth of naught,
And with His blood mankind hath bought.

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.*

(OLD CAROL.)

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